

What is claimed is:

1. A component cost estimation system for estimating a cost of a component, said system comprising: a memory which stores cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another; and a computer, wherein said computer:

receives data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured, and manufacturing steps to be applied to the material;  
10 retrieves a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated manufacturing steps from the cost information; and  
generates data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the designated component based on each of the retrieved costs.

- 15 2. The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein:

the cost information includes information associating the manufacturing steps, devices used in the manufacturing steps, and costs involved in using the devices with one another,

- 20 said computer:

receives data for designating the material, the manufacturing steps, and the devices used in the manufacturing steps;

retrieves costs associated with the designated material and the designated devices from the cost information; and

- 25 determines a result of estimation based on a sum of the retrieved

costs.

3. The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein the cost information includes information associating the manufacturing steps and costs of child components which are the components to be used in the manufacturing steps with each other.

4. The component cost estimation system according to claim 1, wherein:

the manufacturing steps include a pressing process;

the cost information includes information associating a pressing device to be used in the pressing process and a cost involved in using the pressing device with each other; and

said computer;

receives data for designating the pressing process, a material to which the pressing process is applied, and the pressing device to be used in the pressing process;

retrieves costs associated with the designated material and the designated pressing device from the cost information; and

determines a result of estimation based on a sum of the retrieved costs.

5. The component cost estimation system according to claim 4, wherein said computer obtains costs of molds to be used in steps included in the pressing process, and uses the obtained costs as costs retrieved from the cost information.

6. The component cost estimation system according to claim 5, wherein said computer obtains the costs of the molds which are to

be used in the respective steps included in the pressing process, and which are either newly manufactured, or manufactured by remodeling an existing mold.

7. The component cost estimation system according to claim  
5 1, wherein:

said memory stores the cost information associated with each region engaging in manufacturing the component;

said computer:

receives data for designating a region engaging in manufacturing  
10 the component; and

determines a result of estimation of the cost of the component based on costs retrieved from the cost information associated with the designated region.

8. The component cost estimation system according to claim  
15 1, wherein said computer:

is ready to receive designation to a part of the plurality of manufacturing steps; and

determines a result of estimation of the cost of the component by considering predetermined standard manufacturing steps to be  
20 designated in stead of the manufacturing steps other than the designated manufacturing step.

9. The component cost estimation system according to claim  
1, further comprising a reception server which receives an access from outside via a network, and sends the data representing the result  
25 of estimation of the cost of the component obtained by said computer

to an accesser.

10. A component cost estimation system which receives accesses from a plurality of working bodies via a network, and estimates a cost of a component, said system comprising:

5 a memory which stores cost information for associating a material of a component to be manufactured, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps to be applied to the material, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another;

a reception server which receives designation data for  
10 designating the material of the component and the manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from the working bodies who request an estimation via said network; and

an estimation computer,

wherein said estimation computer:

15 retrieves costs associated with the material and manufacturing steps designated by the designation data received by said reception server from the cost information;

generates estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs;

20 and

sends the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

11. The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, wherein:

25 said reception server receives a browsing request for browsing a

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content of the cost information; and

said estimation computer sends the content of the cost information to a sender of the browsing request via said network in response to the browsing request received by said reception server.

5        12. The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, further comprising a verification data memory which stores verification data for verifying the working bodies,

wherein said reception server:

receives verification data sent from the working bodies via said  
10 network; and

determines whether or not to receive the designation data from the working bodies based on the verification data sent from the working bodies and the verification data stored in said verification data memory, and refuses to receive the designation data when  
15 determined not to receive the designation data.

13. The component cost estimation system according to claim 10, wherein the cost information is made up of information obtained based on a cost of a component provided by a working body selected according to a predetermined standard from among a plurality of  
20 working bodies who provide substantially the same component.

14. A cost standard information providing system, comprising:  
a memory which stores a standard value of a cost of a component, the standard value being obtained by collecting and analyzing information on the component provided by a plurality of  
25 working bodies;

a request reception server which receives via a network, a provision request for requesting the standard value to be provided;

an information providing server which provides via said network, the standard value stored in said memory in response to the provision request received by said request reception server.

15. The cost standard information providing system according to claim 14, wherein the standard value represents a cost level which can be achieved with a predetermined effort to be made by a working body who satisfies a predetermined standard in each component field.

10 16. The cost standard information providing system according to claim 14, wherein the standard value is set for each material of the component, and for each manufacturing step.

17. A component cost estimation method for estimating a cost of a component, comprising the steps of:

15 storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps;

receiving data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured, and manufacturing steps to be applied to the designated material;

retrieving a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

generating data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs.

18. A component cost estimation method for receiving accesses from a plurality of working bodies via a network, and estimating a cost of a component, said method comprising the steps of:

- 5 storing cost information for associating a material of a component to be manufactured, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps to be applied to the material, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another;

- receiving designation data for designating the material of the
- 10 component and the manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from the working bodies who request an estimation via said network;

- retrieving costs associated with the material and manufacturing steps designated by the received designation data from the cost information;

- 15 generating estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

- sending the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

- 20 19. A cost standard information providing method comprising the steps of:

- storing a standard value of a cost of a component, the standard value being obtained by collecting and analyzing information on the component provided by a plurality of working bodies;

- 25 receiving via a network, a provision request for requesting the

standard value to be provided; and

providing via said network, the stored standard value in response to the received provision request.

20. A computer-readable recording medium which stores a
- 5 program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a memory for storing cost information associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another, to perform the steps of:
- 10 receiving data for designating a material of a component to be manufactured and manufacturing steps to be applied to the material;
- retrieving a cost associated with the designated material, and costs associated with the designated manufacturing steps from the cost information; and
- 15 generating data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs.

21. A computer-readable recording medium which stores a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a reception server for receiving designation data for designating a
- 20 material of a component to be manufactured and manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from a plurality of working bodies who request an estimation via a network, and is also connected to a memory for storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the
- 25 component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one



another, to perform the steps of:

retrieving costs associated with the material and manufacturing steps designated by the designation data received by said reception server from the cost information;

- 5        generating estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

sending the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

- 10       22. A computer-readable recording medium which stores a program for controlling a computer, which comprises a memory for storing a standard value of a cost of a component obtained by collecting and analyzing information on the component provided by a plurality of working bodies, to perform the steps of:

- 15       receiving via a network, a provision request for requesting the standard value to be provided; and

providing via said network, the standard value stored in said memory in response to the received provision request.

- 20       23. A computer data signal embedded in a carrier wave, and representing a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a memory for storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another, to perform the steps of:

- 25       receiving data for designating a material of a component to be

manufactured and manufacturing steps to be applied to the material;

retrieving a cost associated with the designated material and costs associated with the designated manufacturing steps from the cost information; and

- 5       generating data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs.

24. A computer data signal embedded in a carrier wave, and representing a program for controlling a computer, which is connected to a reception server for receiving designation data for  
10       designating a material of a component to be manufactured and manufacturing steps to be applied to the material from a plurality of working bodies who request an estimation via a network, and is also connected to a memory for storing cost information for associating a material of a component, a cost of the material, manufacturing steps  
15       of the component, and costs involved in the manufacturing steps with one another, to perform the steps of:

retrieving costs associated with the material and manufacturing steps designated by the designation data received by said reception server from the cost information;

- 20       generating estimation result data representing a result of estimation of a cost of the component based on the retrieved costs; and

sending the estimation result data to the working bodies who have requested the estimation via said network.

- 25       25. A computer data signal embedded in a carrier wave, and

representing a program for controlling a computer, which comprises  
a memory for storing a standard value of a cost of a component  
obtained by collecting and analyzing information on the component  
provided by a plurality of working bodies, to perform the steps of:

- 5 receiving via a network, a provision request for requesting the  
standard value to be provided; and

providing via said network, the standard value stored in said  
memory in response to the received provision request.

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